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ABSTRACT

To understand the capacity of middle and high schools to support reading, a study examined two questions: (1) How do middle/high schools organize and allocate resources to support reading? and (2) How do middle/high schools respond to resource and structural challenges created by the multiple institutional actors that comprise the school system? Combining an organizational and institutional view of schools, the study examined how eight high-performing California middle and high schools organized resources to support the improvement of reading. In particular, it is concerned with how the state's prior and current language arts curriculum policies shape and support the development and implementation of reading programs. Interviews were conducted with principals, teachers, and a central office administrator in each district. Classroom observations were made, and documents were collected. Findings suggest middle/high schools have adopted a limited number of strategies aimed at improving the literacy skills of their students. Because of organizational and resource constraints (including limited funding, scheduling limitations, curriculum requirements, few teachers with reading expertise, and a lack of appropriate materials) the most commonly adopted practices included reading or writing across the curriculum and sustained silent reading. These schools, however, were able to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers and attract a diverse student population, which also contributed to the students' reading development and academic achievement. Most important was how these schools distributed their resources within the school. They made sure students of all ability levels received high quality instruction that accommodated differences in students' abilities, and they provided support programs that gave opportunities for additional instruction. (Contains 40 notes, 8 tables of data, and 25 references.) (NKA)

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Middle and high schools are confronted with balancing the often-competing demands of meeting the academic needs of their students while responding to organizational constraints and policy demands. On the one hand, they are asked to improve the academic achievement of the students they serve. Increasingly, this has included the improvement of reading, an area traditionally considered the responsibility of elementary schools. On the other hand, resource constraints and the uncertain policy environment in which schools operate may limit their capacity to develop broad-based reading programs. The organization of secondary schools as well as teachers trained as subject matter specialists are challenges schools confront as they respond to the reading deficiencies of their students. To understand the capacity of middle and high schools to support reading, this study examines two questions: (1) How do middle and high schools organize and allocate resources to support reading? (2) How do middle and high schools respond to resource and structural challenges created by the multiple institutional actors that comprise the school system? To answer these questions, this paper examines how eight high performing California middle and high schools organized resources to support the improvement of reading.

Analytical Perspective

This study combines an organizational and institutional view of schools. From an organizational perspective, the allocation of resources has important implications for teaching and learning (Bidwell & Kasarda, 1980; Barr & Dreeben, 1983; Burns &

Mason, 1995). In this regard, this research considers how instructional resources are allocated in schools and classrooms to support reading, and within the classroom, how these resources are organized and managed by teachers. It identifies important resources as the distribution of teachers' knowledge and skills, instructional activities in the classroom, variations in teacher and student competencies (Barr & Dreeben, 1983), the allocation of time to instructional activities, and differences in curricula materials. From an institutional perspective, the institutional complexity of the school system is likely to affect the development of school level reading programs (Wong et al., 1997; Scott, 1995; Powell & DiMaggio, 1991; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). We consider schools as connected to and affected by the larger system of relations that comprise the school system. In particular, we are concerned with how the state's prior and current language arts curriculum policies shape and support the development and implementation of reading programs.

The California Effective Elements Study: Research Methods and Site Selection

The sample for this study comes from the larger California Effective Elements study. The project used a regression analysis to identify a school's "outlier status." This was based on the "distance" of a particular school from its predicted Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) reading scores. Actual 1998 reading scores were used and poverty and Limited English Proficiency status were the predictor variables.[1] Some schools that the state department of education identified as "special" (e.g., magnets, juvenile detention facilities, special education schools) were not included in the analysis.

[1]The poverty predictor was an 8th and 11th grade measure derived from a parent education variable coded for all students taking the STAR.

Since the model accounted for much of the variation, few schools were extreme outliers.[2] Schools were ranked according to their outlier status (from positive to negative) and a sample of 20 schools was selected that included schools from each end of the range. The final site selection also took into consideration geography to insure coverage of the state's largest districts and was influenced by forced substitutions when schools declined to participate.

This sub-study included schools from the larger sample that were at least 0.5 standard deviation (SD) out from the mean. These schools were all "positive outliers." Four middle and four high schools, located in six communities in California, were used in this study (see Table 1). Each school was visited for two days in the spring of 1999. Interviews were conducted with principals, teachers, and a central office administrator in each district, classroom observations were made, and documents collected. Principal responses to a reading survey were also used. The socioeconomic characteristics of each school are described in Table 2, and student ethnic characteristics in Table 3.

INSERT TABLES 1, 2, AND 3 HERE

In this article, we consider how secondary schools organize resources to support reading. We argue that how schools organize and allocate resources to support instruction made important contributions to reading development and improvement. A focus on reading development at the middle and high school levels is a recent

[2] The range for high schools was from –1.40 SD to 1.44 SD (with one school at 3.33 SD) from the mean, and for middle schools from –1.33 SD to 1.68 SD from the mean. It is also important to note that the model did not control for percent minority/ethnicity or percent free and reduced lunch. This resulted in a

phenomenon, facilitated by California state policies aimed at the improvement of reading. Even though these were issued as policy recommendations, and not as directives, they raised the visibility of reading as a problem and offered solutions for schools to follow. The reading strategies schools adopted enhanced a focus on reading, but conformed to the resource and policy constraints under which these schools operated. More importantly, we found that the schools we visited made quality resources available to students of all ability levels, developed programs that attracted a diverse population of students, and recruited and retained highly skilled teachers.

This article is organized as follows. In the first section, we examine the California state policy context and how districts we visited responded to changes in state curriculum policy. The second section describes specific programs and strategies schools adopted to improve the reading skills of their students, and the organizational and institutional factors that constrained the choices available to schools. In the third section we examine the characteristics that are likely to set these schools apart from and account for much of their academic success. We conclude with a discussion of the policy implications of these findings.[3]

State Policy Context

The schools in this study operate in a complex and changing policy and political environment. In California, past as well as current state curriculum policy have implications for how teachers and school administrators address reading. In this section, we examine local curriculum initiatives in light of the state policy context. We first review the state's current curriculum policy from the perspective of previous policy

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sample where the top end was very different from the bottom in terms of ethnicity and poverty as defined by percent free and reduced lunch.

initiatives and political events. We then examine how districts responded to the state curriculum policy to support reading within their own district.

California Curriculum Policy

During the 1980s, California was considered a leader in education reform in general and curriculum reform in particular. Under the leadership of State Superintendent Bill Honig, the California Department of Education (CDE) developed a curriculum-driven comprehensive reform strategy that included curriculum frameworks in core subject matter areas, a performance based assessment system, and a professional development network of teachers and universities (Carlos & Kirst, 1997). The language arts framework, first adopted in 1987, emphasized literature-based instruction and a "whole language" approach to literacy.

This approach to language arts instruction was called into question beginning in 1993 when the 1992 NAEP scores were released. These scores placed California near the bottom in reading proficiency among the states. The 1994 California Learning Assessment System (CLAS) scores, released in spring of 1995, also indicated low student performance in core subject areas, especially language arts. A few months later, the 1994 NAEP scores were released, which placed the state last among the 39 participating states. A theory emerged that linked the poor test scores to a shift away from traditional approaches to teaching reading to an emphasis on whole language and literature based approaches (Carlos & Kirst, 1997). The CDE and Honig were criticized for promoting whole language while ignoring phonics instruction.

The poor reading performance led to a public and political backlash, resulting in a shift in policy direction and changes in the state level educational leadership

[3] School and district names and the names of school and district staff are pseudonyms.

arrangements.[4] The newly elected superintendent, Delaine Eastin, appointed a task force in the spring of 1995 to develop new guidelines for reading and mathematics. The task force issued a number of non-binding advisories that emphasized "a balanced and comprehensive approach to reading" (p.3), and included literature, language, and skills development (California Reading Task Force, 1995). In October 1995, the state legislature proposed and passed a series of bills, called the "ABC Bills," regarding the adoption of instructional materials that emphasized basic skills. These bills proscribed a level of detail in addressing curriculum and instructional issues that was new to the state legislature (Carlos & Kirst, 1997). In addition, the state legislature reconfigured the decision-making hierarchy in curriculum and assessment policy by creating independent state "advisory" agencies. The creation of these agencies diminished the authority of the CDE and contributed to increased leadership fragmentation at the state level.

Building on these legislative initiatives, the state assembly adopted additional legislation aimed at improving literacy and basic skills. In 1995, the legislature passed the California Assessment and Academic Achievement Act (AB 265) that required the development of a new set of statewide academic standards. This was followed in 1997 with SB 376 that established the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program. These bills required the development of grade-by-grade standards and an assessment program that emphasized basic skills. Other legislation adopted in 1996 authorized programs to support the purchase of instructional materials and professional development that stressed phonics based reading instruction. A bill to reduce class size in grades K-3, grades considered crucial to improving literacy, was also adopted.

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[4] At the about the same time, concerns were expressed about the mathematics framework and the California Learning Assessment System (CLAS), adding to the dissatisfaction with the educational leadership and

As a result of the political and policy changes, improving literacy emerged at the top of the school reform agenda. Named the California Reading Initiative (CRI), it embraced the various initiatives passed since 1995 to promote reading and language arts instruction. Within this agenda was an emphasis on "an organized explicit skills program and continued and sustained teacher professional development in reading instruction."[5] To support this initiative, AB 1086, passed in 1997, authorized funds to districts to provide in-service training in reading instruction, beginning with teachers in kindergarten through third grade, and later expanded to include fourth through eighth grade teachers (effective 1998-99 school year). Following the lead of earlier legislation, this bill specified that the content of these courses include phonemic awareness, phonics, and decoding skills.

District Response to State Curriculum Policy

Although it may never have been the intent of the CDE that schools adopt whole language at the expense of phonics, there was a "pendulum" effect. The legislative shift back to a focus on basic skills represents an emphasis in the other direction. These policies are reinforced by California textbook policy, which requires that districts spend 85 percent of their textbook allocation on state-approved textbooks or seek a waiver to purchase non-approved texts. Operating within a policy environment where there are unresolved and often competing approaches to curriculum requires careful navigation by school boards and district administrators. The highly prescriptive nature of recent legislative curriculum initiatives further complicates the picture for district administrators.

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student performance. See Carlos and Kirst (1997).

[5] Personal communication, California Department of Education. 8-2-99.

In this section we examine how the districts we visited responded to the state policy initiatives designed to promote reading instruction. We found that the districts we visited adopted three types of responses to state policy. In two districts—Sherwood and Beachwood—a policy approach that emphasized both whole language and phonics under the whole language era carried over after the state policy shift to an emphasis on phonics. For two of the districts—Mercury and Shady Grove—the new state policies were the impetus to develop and implement a district wide reading plan. These plans reflected current state curriculum policies and took advantage of the federal and state resources made available by the legislation to support the implementation of their plan. The other district—Fieldston—took a compliance orientation. That is, they approached the state policy initiatives as a discrete source of funds and did not link it to a district reading plan. For example, they applied for state grants to provide teacher training in reading instruction and followed the state guidelines in the design of the training course. The sixth district, Montevideo, did not have a district-wide reading plan for middle or high schools.

Sherwood school district (a kindergarten through eighth grade district) continued a curriculum that emphasized both whole language and phonics during a period when there was a statewide emphasis on whole language. In an interview with the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Martha Clark described how the Sherwood School District only partially accepted new instructional practices that had been recommended by the state. This happened with math and with whole language. As districts around Sherwood adopted Mathland in response to "the new math ways," Clark said, Sherwood decided to continue with some basic skills and adopted a Silver

Burdit/Dale Seymour combination package. It was similar for reading. When whole language was "a really big movement in the district," the board refused to adopt it if it meant dropping phonics. Clark concludes, "So it's been a school district that hasn't gone with this pendulum so much. . . . We are kind of solid in the middle, so we don't have to retract and put as much time in retooling. . . . The school board has always said, 'Find within the framework [of the state's recommendations] what's to keep the balance.'"[6]

After the state adopted policies emphasizing phonics and basic skills, the district continued to identify what they considered to be the major components of an effective language arts program. They were halfway through the process of re-writing their language arts standards when the state adopted its current standards. Although they tried to incorporate the state standards, Clark said, "we didn't go with only adopting the state standards because there were some things in them that our teachers felt were not appropriate for our children."[7]

The Beachwood district took a similar approach to developing the language arts curriculum. "We have tried to emphasize that you do need to know a little bit about everything. We do need to know about foundations of language and what role phonics plays," said the Director of Curriculum and Instruction.[8] To accomplish this goal, the district "went with a multiple adoption," that is, in order to achieve a balanced approach to language arts, they adopted more than one textbook. This strategy provided schools with the opportunity to select curriculum materials that balanced basic instruction with more complex types of learning (Venezky 1996).

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[6] District interview, Beachwood Unified School District, 5-4-99.
[7] District interview, Sherwood School District, 3-24-99.
[8] District interview, Beachwood Unified School District, 5-4-99.

The Mercury City Schools, which did not have a systemwide district reading policy for junior and high schools, took a number of steps to meet the new state mandates. In July 1997, the district hired Yvonne Smith as Director of Curriculum and Staff Development, a newly created position. Her responsibilities included helping the district meet the state mandates on standards and assessment and developing a reading program for the district. The development of a district-wide reading program involved several steps, including negotiations with the teachers' union to modify collective bargaining agreements and collaboration with area colleges and universities to develop a reading curriculum and provide teacher training. The district applied for federal class size reduction funds to support the program, but also re-allocated district funds to pay the costs of training and teacher salaries. Commenting on the new district reading initiative, a reading specialist at Mercury High said, "There has not been such a concentrated effort on reading in many years."[9]

Shady Grove adopted a reading initiative beginning in July 1998 that focused on teacher training and peer coaching. The district's new Chancellor of Instruction, Tom Albert, facilitated this initiative by developing the Institute of Learning to provide training and professional development for teachers on how to improve reading and writing. The district also reached an agreement with the teacher's union to develop a site-based system of peer coaches to work with teachers on literacy.

Finally, Fieldstone district, which took a compliance orientation to the state initiatives, applied for state funds to support literacy training for their fourth through eighth grade teachers. Called balanced literacy, the training incorporated the state-mandated curriculum emphasizing phonics instruction. Although the district's director of

[9] Teacher interview, Mercury Senior High, 5-6-99.

curriculum and instruction did not find phonics instruction entirely relevant to middle school instruction, she conceded that the "state basically dictated the curriculum to us."[10]

School Level Reading Support

State curriculum policy provided an impetus that raised awareness of the need to focus on reading development. Nonetheless, it does not tell us how the schools responded or why they adopted the approaches they did. In this section, we examine how the eight schools in the study supported reading. We found that these schools adopted a limited number of strategies—reading or writing across the curriculum or sustained silent reading, remedial reading classes, and tutoring—to improve reading. In the middle schools, it was the case that the language arts program provided the strongest support for reading. In the following section, we describe the reading supports found in the eight schools, followed by an examination of the organizational and institutional constraints that structured the schools' approach to reading.

Reading Programs

When principals were asked on a reading survey if the school had any specific program targeted to students with reading development needs that was schoolwide, two of the eight schools in this study reported such a program (see Table 4). These two schools, Thomas Jefferson and Collin Springs high schools, both in the same district, reported that they implemented the Accelerated Reader Program, a computerized managed reading program. In addition, three schools, Mercury and Thomas Jefferson high schools and Los Arcos middle school, reported that they had a reading specialist with a California reading credential. In all three of these schools, the reading specialist provided reading instruction to selected students identified as reading significantly below

[10] District interview, Fieldston School District, 3-22-99.

grade level. The percent of students identified as having reading problems ranged from a low of 0.93 percent at Montevideo High to 62.15 percent at Webster Junior High School (see Table 4). The remaining five schools (one school did not return the survey) reported that between 24 and 30 percent of their students had reading problems, suggesting a need for reading improvement at most of the schools. In addition, five schools—Mercury, Thomas Jefferson, Collin Springs, Anderson and Los Arcos—reported that they had a formal reading policy, and six schools—Mercury, Thomas Jefferson, Collin Springs, Anderson, Webster, and Los Arcos—reported that they had a formal strategy to promote reading across the curriculum.

INSERT TABLE 4 HERE

Interviews with district administrators, principals, and teachers provide a more detailed description of the reading supports implemented by the schools (see Table 5). First, reading and writing across the curriculum and sustained silent reading (SSR) were the most widely used strategies. Five schools—Mercury and Thomas Jefferson high schools, Webster Jr. High, and Anderson and Harriet Tubman middle schools—implemented reading or writing across the curriculum strategies, and three high schools—Thomas Jefferson, Montevideo, and Collin Springs—supported sustained silent reading (SSR).[11] These strategies are designed to increase the amount of time the students read. SSR typically sets aside a regular period of time, usually 20 minutes to

[11] Even though Los Arcos reported reading across the curriculum on the reading survey, interviewees did not report implementing it. Montevideo began implementing SSR in spring 1999, after the administration of the reading survey in October 1998. At the time of our visit in March 1999, the school had participated in SSR twice.

begin with, for students—and teachers—to read. Reading and writing across the curriculum reinforces reading and writing in all subject areas and usually involves training teachers in some reading or writing strategies. It is beyond the scope of this project to determine how well, or how extensive either of these strategies was implemented.

INSERT TABLE 5 HERE

A second practice in the high schools was to offer a remedial or development reading class. Three of the four high schools—Mercury, Thomas Jefferson, and Collin Springs—offered a reading class to help students identified with reading problems. Mercury High School offered the course as an elective for ninth grade students (there were six sections of this class offered during the spring 1999 semester). The curriculum included SSR, the Accelerated Reader program, reading for main idea and detail, and vocabulary development. Students were encouraged to take the course based on their eighth grade test scores. Collin Springs offered a reading development class for ninth and tenth grade students reading four or more levels below grade level expectations. This class provided reading instruction in reading comprehension, vocabulary, and "speed reading." The reading development class at Thomas Jefferson was designed to teach literacy skills to students who scored below the 49th percentile on the SAT-9.

Third, one school, Webster Junior High School, provided after school tutoring in reading. Over 100 students at Webster whose SAT-9 and benchmark scores indicated the need for reading support were required to participate in the after school tutoring program. The program's purpose was to help raise the school's SAT-9 scores in reading, a goal set

by both the district and the school. This program relied on teachers who volunteered to tutor students after school.

Fourth, there was strong support for reading from the Language Arts department in the middle schools. Three middle schools incorporated reading into the language arts curriculum. Los Arcos is one example of how the middle schools structured language arts instruction. They offered a "core" class that included three periods in the sixth grade, two periods in seventh grade, and one period in eighth grade. In the sixth and seventh grade, one full period was devoted to reading. Anderson Fundamental school also had a block schedule for teaching language arts, which, according to the principal, "gives [the language arts teachers] some flexibility in using a lot of reading and writing."[12] Teachers followed the district curriculum and used the district's standards as guidelines for where students should be academically. At Tubman, reading, writing, grammar, oral communication, and vocabulary were included in the language arts curriculum. In addition, the school identified Language Arts for program improvement, a task that fell almost exclusively on the Language Arts teachers.

At Montevideo high school, a strong English department was cited as the primary resource for reading improvement. The teachers in the English department developed an approach to teaching English literature that emphasized reading and comprehension using multiple methods and modalities (e.g., reading to students, group reading, viewing movies, writing, assembling writing portfolios). The co-chairs of the department, both veterans trained as reading teachers, provided mentoring to new teachers to help them learn strategies for improving student reading.

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[12] Principal interview, Anderson Fundamental Intermediate, 5-3-99.

Finally, schools often allocated professional development resources to support reading development. The Language Arts teachers at Tubman received training in reading instructional strategies, something the school would like to extend to non-Language Arts teachers. A language arts teacher said, "We've gone to as many workshops that we can to get ideas."[13] When Mercury adopted writing across the curriculum, the English Department offered training to the faculty in how to implement this strategy. Most of the faculty participated in the training sessions, according to Laura Jones, the English Department Chair, who considered the strategy to be widely implemented. In contrast, the school was less successful when it attempted to adopt reading across the curriculum. According to Jones, only about fifteen teachers participated in the training, resulting in a strategy that was not widely implemented. Webster Junior High held two Saturday afternoon in-services during the 1998-99 school year that focused on reading instruction.

As Collin Springs began testing their students and found that they were not reading as well as they should have been, the school sought approval from the district to train the entire staff in Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) strategies. During the 1997-98 school year, four staff development days—about thirty hours of training per teacher—were devoted to learning SDAIE strategies. The principal felt these strategies were useful because of the high number of second language learners in the school (22 percent), and they were strategies that could be applied to all students to "bring them along without overwhelming them."[14]

Constraints on implementing reading programs

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[13] Teacher interview, Harriet Tubman Middle, 3-24-99.
[14] Principal interview, Collin Springs Senior High, 3-23-99.

We expect the approach a school takes to reading instruction to be shaped by its institutional and organizational characteristics. A third factor, policy influences, is also likely to impact the school's approach. Nonetheless, the data did not allow us to extract changes in school level practices related to policy changes since we only have data on current practices and not previous practices (under the whole language policy). We do conclude, however, that the state emphasis on reading improvement was a major impetus for the initiation and implementation of many of the reading programs. It should be noted that this data is preliminary, and therefore suggestive of how institutional and organizational characteristics structure middle and high school reading programs.

Schools as institutions include conceptions of appropriate roles and responsibilities that establish the parameters within which teachers and administrators operate. These can be normative, such as beliefs and expectations, or operational, that is, technical factors that determine the delivery of instruction. We identified the expectation that the students entering junior high or high school already knew how to read as one (normative) constraining factor on the development of reading programs. For example, according to Smith, the Director of Curriculum and Staff Development in Mercury, there had been no systemwide district reading policy for junior high and high schools until after the statewide initiative. As Smith noted, there was a belief "that they knew how to read before they got to junior high." There were reading programs in a few high schools, but "there was no coordinated curriculum, no expectation for having any reading training." [15] Teachers at Tubman also struggled with the fact that many of their middle school students had not acquired the reading skills that they should have in their elementary school years. Much of this deficiency related to issues of critical thinking and

comprehension, but did not exclude the more basic problem of low proficiency levels. "We realized," a Tubman language arts teacher said, "we needed to focus on reading because our kids can read words but they weren't thinking about what they were reading. . . . They were not able to predict. They were not able to draw conclusions."[16]

One function that policies serve is to alter these expectations. Indeed, the California Reading Initiative and the political response to the poor performance on standardized tests raised the awareness of the need for reading development. Nonetheless, such expectations are often reinforced by the technical components of the middle and high school curriculum, a second constraint confronting middle and high schools. The basic goal of most middle school language arts programs and high school English departments is to impart to students a knowledge and appreciation of literature. This literature-based reading curriculum, often the emphasis in elementary reading programs as well, often lacks any congruity with the reading needs of content areas, leaving students ill-prepared to read other types of materials (Venezky, 1996). Different skills are needed for narrative reading than those demanded of expository texts, the primary source used for mathematics, social studies, and science. At the same time, middle school language arts curriculum and high school English curriculum are designed for students who already know how to read and rarely teach basic reading skills. Increasingly, students are entering middle and high school who do not know how to read well, either because they are second language learners or because they did not acquire reading skills in the elementary grades.

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[15] District interview, Mercury City Schools, 5-5-99.
[16] Teacher interview, Harriet Tubman Middle, 3-24-99.

The resource constraints that schools operate under were another factor that structured their approach to reading improvement. This included funding and scheduling (time) constraints, the level of teacher expertise, and the availability of appropriate materials. The allocation of time during the day is often determined by state and district curriculum requirements. As California has increased the number of courses required for graduation and mandated other courses, reading competes with the scheduling of other, required courses.[17] Another resource limitation was the availability of teachers with reading expertise. Typical of many high schools is the focus on teaching content, where teachers have subject matter expertise but do not know how to teach reading. Reading expertise may be less of an issue among middle school language arts teachers since many middle school teachers have a K-8, multi-subject credential. At least one school, Thomas Jefferson High School, mentioned the difficulty of finding reading strategies that were appropriate for secondary school students. The district is promoting The Institute of Learning, a literacy program out of the University of Pittsburgh. Teachers have received training in this program, but were having difficulty transferring what they learned to the secondary school level.

The availability and source of funds is another factor that structured a school's approach to reading. For example, two high schools with remedial reading courses supported them with Title I funds. According to Paul Daniels, a reading teacher at Mercury, "Efforts to improve reading have been special programs, such as Title I. So only schools with special funds [can support reading programs], and most Title I money

[17] For example, AB 365, passed in 1997, requires a high school pupil to complete one course in visual or performing arts and one course in a foreign language to receive a high school diploma. SB 669, passed in 1997, requires school districts to ensure that all pupils in grades 9 to 12 receive parenting education.

goes to elementary schools."[18] Since Title I at Mercury was categorical funding, it is not surprising that these funds were used to support a separate reading class. Collin Springs also used Title I funds to reduce class size in some classes and to buy paperback books for students to read. They supplemented Title I money with class size reduction funds beginning in January 1999 to lower class size in ninth grade English. The combination of lower class size and block scheduling, which gave ninth grade English teachers ninety minutes, allowed teachers ". . . to know the level of their [students'] skills very effectively. And then they can address their skills."[19]

The appeal of reading or writing across the curriculum and SSR, particularly in high schools, is apparent when viewed from a resource perspective. These strategies distribute responsibility for reading improvement across all teachers. Regular teachers, who are often trained in workshops or inservices presented by the district, school personnel, or outside experts, can implement these strategies. They normally do not require extensive knowledge of how to teach reading, or a special certification. They also help to relieve language arts or English teachers of part of the responsibility for reading improvement, an important consideration in the distribution of responsibilities within a school. Most importantly, these strategies do not alter scheduling routines as they can be absorbed into existing courses. They do not require introducing an additional course to the schedule, something that would necessitate finding staff, materials, and space.

The emphasis of the middle or junior high school curriculum is also likely to affect a school's approach to reading development (Hough, 1997; McPartland, 1990). The curriculum orientation and reading approach for the three middle schools and the one

[18] Teacher interview, Mercury Senior High, 5-6-99.
[19] Principal interview, Collin Springs Senior High, 3-23-99.

junior high school are shown in Table 6. This table suggests that schools with a student centered curriculum incorporated reading into the language arts curriculum while those with a subject matter orientation were more likely to adopt reading across the curriculum. The two schools with a student-centered curriculum, Los Arcos and Anderson, included reading as part of their language arts curriculum. Webster, which had a subject matter orientation, adopted reading across the curriculum and offered after school tutoring. According to the principal, at one time the school offered a separate class for reading, something that was dropped because of changes in district policy. These practices are consistent with school practices that organize instruction within separate subject areas.

INSERT TABLE 6 HERE

Tubman, the other middle school, had a mixed approach with a subject matter orientation for seventh and eight graders and a student-centered approach for sixth graders. When the school opened in 1991, Tubman started a partnership with the College Board Equity 2000 Program. According to the principal, "the whole concept of the College Board was to force students into a college track, using Algebra as a gatekeeper."[20] At the same time, the sixth grade operated with more of a middle school orientation, with self-contained classrooms and team teaching. With the increased emphasis on reading development, Tubman reported that they were considering moving to a block schedule for language arts, a format that would allow teachers the time necessary to assess their student achievement levels and provide more individualized instruction.

[20] Principal interview, Harriet Tubman Middle, 3-24-99.

Finally, this study suggests that the approach schools take to the issues of literacy may vary according to institutional factors, including the school SES characteristics and student characteristics. For example, Thomas Jefferson and Collin Springs high schools, and Webster junior high school had the largest percent of low-income students (75 percent, 61 percent, and 65 percent respectively, Table 2). Webster and Thomas Jefferson also reported the most students identified with reading problems (62 percent and 46 percent, with 26 percent reported at Collin Springs, Table 4). Thomas Jefferson and Collin Springs, which are in the same district, reported implementing SSR to meet district requirements regarding literacy standards. In addition, Thomas Jefferson offered a variety of other supports for reading, perhaps reflective of the high percent of students identified with reading deficiencies. Webster also was the only middle school to specifically offer tutoring in reading. While all of the middle schools offered support programs, these were general support and not designed specifically for reading. More research is needed to determine how these as well other institutional characteristics, such as degree of urbanicity and language characteristics, affect the choices schools and districts make.

Other Support that Benefited Reading Development

To explain why student achievement in these schools was better than predicted by student socioeconomic characteristics, we looked at other organizational and institutional factors that were likely to support student achievement and reading development. As noted earlier, we argue that the organization and allocation of resources to support instruction made important contributions to reading development. Most notably, these

schools attracted and retained highly qualified teachers and adopted strategies that allowed them to recruit a diverse student population. In these ways, these schools and districts were able to minimize the effects of the external conditions under which they operated, including concentrated poverty, residential segregation (Massey & Denton,1993; Wilson, 1987) and the uneven professional preparation of teachers (Kennedy, 1992; Murane et al., 1991). Additionally, these schools allocated high quality instructional resources (teacher competencies and materials) to all educational tracks within the school, teachers adapted their instructional practices to accommodate differences in student abilities, and schools offered a variety of support programs to assist students. These issues are explicated in this section.

Teacher recruitment and retention

Contributing to the success of these schools is their ability to attract and retain highly qualified teachers. At a time when the national pool of teacher applicants is comprised of people with a broad range of teaching competencies, the ability to draw those teachers in the highest tier becomes particularly important. Principals and teachers at all of these schools cited outstanding teachers as key to their success. One way to measure teaching quality is to look at teacher characteristics: credentials, teaching experience, and turnover rate. Teachers at these schools were more likely to have full teaching credentials, more years of experience, and were likely to remain for longer periods of time in the same district—an indicator of low rates of teacher turnover—when compared to teachers at the county, district, and state-level. Table 7 provides information on teacher credentials and experience at each of these levels. Although these

characteristics do not necessarily guarantee quality instruction, they are likely to have an impact on the capacity of the schools to deliver viable services.

INSERT TABLE 7 HERE

Seven of the eight schools in our sample had a percentage of teachers with full teaching credentials that was higher than the state average of 87.5 percent. This ranged from the 100 percent of full-credentialed teachers at Mercury and Tubman, to the 91.2 percent at Los Arcos. Only Anderson Fundamental Middle School, where 86 percent of the teachers had full credentials, did not surpass the state average.

Seven of the eight schools staffed teachers with more years of teaching experience than the state average of 12.9 years, ranging from 14.7 years of experience at Collin Springs High School, to 21 years of experience at Montevideo High School. Further, teachers in these schools were more likely to remain in the same district longer than the state average of 10.4 years. Ranging from 11.6 years at Los Arcos Middle School to 17.4 years at Webster Junior High School, teachers in seven of these eight schools had been teaching in the same district for more years than the state average. Similar trends are observed when the characteristics of these schools are compared to those at the county and district levels.

Differences in teacher characteristics among the levels discussed above raise the question of how these schools were able to attract teachers with full credentials and retain them for longer periods of time. Our findings point to the importance of these schools' recruitment strategies. Principals in these schools were actively involved in the hiring

process, pinpointing qualities that teachers needed to work well in the school. Collin Springs's principal described her approach to hiring: "We interview very carefully when we bring teachers on board. Because we really want them to be people who are willing to work with all kinds of kids." Since taking on the principalship, she has worked to recruit younger teachers, as she felt the predominately older staff members created a static, "unhealthy" environment. She described her staff as a "really good cross section now, from young energetic people as well as the. . . seasoned ones."[21] The principal of Los Arcos was appointed to the middle school the year it lost eight teachers to another district or to retirement. The school used substitute teachers until the end of November 1997 because, as the principal explained: "I'm so stubborn that I wasn't about to settle for anybody. I was going to settle for only the best I could find."[22]

The principal of Anderson explained her strategy of hiring talented student teachers: "We've tried to encourage our student teachers if they are really good ones. We recently had three [student teachers], and we've encouraged them to apply. . . ." Anderson's principal also hired teachers whom she knew through experience to be well qualified. She described her efforts to contact a teacher with whom she had worked at another school. "We had a language arts vacancy so I called her and told her she needed to interview for that and she did, and the [interview] team loved her, and she's here."[23]

In some instances, the district hiring process facilitated access to a broad pool of teacher applicants. Smith noted that Mercury City School District aggressively recruited teachers from outside of California, having sent teams to recruit in, for example, Arizona and New Mexico. "We don't want to hire unskilled people," she said, "so we're willing

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[21] Principal interview, Collin Springs Senior High, 3-23-99.
[22] Principal interview, Los Arcos Middle, 4-1-99.

to go to the states that have reciprocity with California to attract them to sign contracts to come here."[24] Fieldstone City School District, too, had a national recruiting program that recruited teachers from South Dakota, North Dakota, Kansas, and Utah. The district also held an annual job fair that attracted 400 teacher applicants in spring 1999, from which the district could select to fill its 100 vacancies.

Finally, these schools' reputations in the community also served to mitigate many challenges they might otherwise have faced when hiring teachers. As the principal of Collin Springs put it, "We don't have to look for teachers and we don't have trouble keeping them."[25] The principal of Anderson, too, indicated that the school's reputation drew teachers to them. Several teachers from other districts have visited Anderson to observe the school, "because . . . they've heard about the school or read about it in the paper and they just want to see what it's like."[26] One teacher at Anderson who transferred from a high school noted: "I hadn't realized the reputation here was so stellar that people were begging. . .to be sent here." She recalled that other teachers had asked, "how much I had to bribe someone to effect that transfer."[27] At Mercury City Schools, a comparatively high salary schedule can be attributed in part to the ability of Mercury high school to attract and keep well-qualified teachers. As Murnane et al. (1991) show, adequate funding levels can facilitate solutions to the challenges that districts face in hiring skilled teachers.

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[23] Principal interview, Anderson Fundamental Intermediate, 5-3-99.
[24] District interview, Mercury City Schools, 5-5-99.
[25] Principal interview, Collin Springs Senior High, 3-23-99.
[26] Principal interview, Anderson Fundamental Intermediate, 5-3-99.

School composition and student selection

School composition has important implications for literacy development and student achievement since it establishes the context within which instruction takes place. Schools with large numbers of disadvantaged students pose particular problems in the organization of classroom instruction since these students often need additional assistance and can slow the pace of instruction (Barr & Dreeben, 1983). To mitigate against the challenges of teaching large numbers of disadvantaged students, the schools we visited had developed a wide range of academic offerings that helped attract a diverse student population and added prestige to their school.

The special programs, magnets, and academies available in each of the eight schools and their enrollment criteria are shown in Table 8. The addition of these programs meant that the schools were not solely neighborhood schools; rather, students came from all over the district. The Montevideo Academy of Oceanography Science (MAOS), Principal Lewis said, "is the biggest draw" they have at the school. She noted that teachers in the academy recruited students from several towns in the area for the MAOS program. The Travel and Tourism academy attracted students from throughout the district as well. To this effect, the Associate Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction in Montevideo School District said: "Montevideo High School pulls kids in from all over the district. . . . Montevideo High School by virtue of the MAOS program, by virtue of the Arts Academy, by virtue of the Academy of Travel and Tourism, which was our first academy, has pulled kids in . . . who would typically be going to Bayside High. . . . What you have happening here is that in every one of the middle schools, you

[27] Teacher interview, Anderson Fundamental Intermediate, 5-4-99.

have parents at the end of eighth grade who are making decisions."[28] The same is true of Collin Springs High, where only a fourth of its students come from the local Pacific Beach area, with the rest coming from throughout the entire district. The principal mentioned that before the magnet was introduced to Collin Springs, the school was populated with "beach kids. . . . But since we had the magnet come in it's really recruited a whole different clientele of kids."[29] Likewise, the International Baccalaureate (IB) program at Mercury High, and the IB and magnet programs at Thomas Jefferson High enrolled students from throughout the district.

INSERT TABLE 8 HERE

The addition of the magnet programs, academies, and IB program to the high school curriculum is likely to attract a more able student since the selection process itself may lead to clear differences between those who apply and those who don't (Witte & Thorn, 1996). While the magnets and academies did not have entrance requirements, students were required to apply for the program and priority was given according to the application date. In addition, students usually had to enroll in at least one magnet class a semester to maintain eligibility. Students selected for the IB program were chosen on the basis of their academic and social ability.

Webster Junior High School was also able to attract a diverse set of students because of the special programs it offered, and because it complied with a federal desegregation order still in effect. Students who lived within the school's boundaries

[28] District interview, Montevideo Peninsular School District, 3-29-99.
[29] Principal interview, Collin Springs Senior High, 3-23-99.

were guaranteed a space at the school. However, Webster provided students who lived outside of its boundaries, or even outside of its district, with the opportunity to attend through inter-district or other transfers. There were no selection criteria for these "open enrollment" students. The school principal estimated that during the 1998-99 school year over 200 students attended Webster through this open enrollment opportunity.

As a fundamental school, Anderson provided an alternative educational approach for students in grades six through eight. Primary emphasis was placed on a highly structured program of basic skills and enrichment and the establishment of good study habits. Both parents and students were required to sign a contract, agreeing to comply with the school's code of conduct. The school had the authority to ask a student who was not compliant with the school's strict disciplinary policies to leave. One of the significant differences between Anderson and a regular middle school was that, according to the principal: "We follow through on every single thing that happens."[30]

The enrollment process distinguished students attending Anderson. Students from throughout the Beachwood district were admitted to the school on a first come, first served basis. To enroll for the 1999-2000 school year, 200 parents began camping out in front of the school several days prior to the enrollment day. The first 150 students in line were accepted and enrolled. Those who were not admitted were put on a waiting list.

Tubman middle school, on the other hand, bused students in from a low-income neighborhood. Since Tubman was located in a high-income area, the district drew the school boundaries to insure equity among the district's three middle schools. The goal was to maintain some economic diversity within the school and prevent a concentration of low-income students in any one school. Los Arcos was unusual in its diversity, as it

had a highly regarded special education program that enrolled students from throughout the district.

Ability grouping and the allocation of resources

As with many middle and high schools, the schools we visited all had different educational tracks to accommodate academic and ability differences among students. The use of tracking is controversial for a number of reasons. The concern of most opponents of tracking is that it leads to different opportunities to learn—there is an unequal allocation of instruction across groups—that leads to inequality in achievement (Gamoran et al. 1995; Gamoran & Weinstein, 1998; Loveless, 1999). Nonetheless, research findings suggest that differences in the rate of instruction may work better for different types of students (Slavin, 1987). To offset the effects of tracking, the schools we visited adopted strategies that helped to improve instruction in the low tracks (Gamoran, 1993). This included allocating resources (teaching competencies and materials) equally across tracks, high level instruction that accommodated differences in students' skill levels, and programs that provided students additional opportunities to receive extra instruction that was coordinated with their regular classroom curriculum.

Allocation of resources. The schools we visited allocated resources—curricular materials and teaching competencies—equally across tracks.. For one, we found teachers taught in all tracks. This avoided a common practice of assigning the best teachers to the upper track and the poorest teachers to the lowest track. At Mercury high school, it was not unusual to find a teacher teaching advanced, general, and IB courses. This was true of all the core subject areas. The principal said, "I have teachers that, while they teach the International Baccalaureate kids, also insist on having the basic classes, too. So,

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[30] Principal interview, Anderson Fundamental Intermediate, 5-3-99.

while those International Baccalaureate teachers get extra training, our bottom kids also receive the benefits of some of that training because some of my very best teachers teach in both programs."[31] The situation was similar at the other high schools. At Montevideo, a veteran English teacher chose to teach primarily general track ninth grade students, believing that the ninth grade is a critical year in which to engage students in high school and to identify and help students work through potential literacy problems.

Several schools made sure they had books and other materials that were appropriate for different reading levels. For example, Tubman middle school used school improvement monies to buy supplemental materials that were appropriate for low achieving sixth grade students. They purchased materials for the school's English language development students as well. The librarian at Mercury high made sure the school had books to accommodate every reading level from about the 4th grade for students in the Accelerated Reader program to college level materials for the IB students. As mentioned, Collin Springs bought paperback books at different reading levels, and Thomas Jefferson spent $40,000 to buy books for their Accelerated Reader program.

Quality of instruction. Among many of the teachers in these schools, there was an awareness of individual students' ability levels and variation in instructional practices that accommodated differences in student needs. This was facilitated by assessment practices that helped teachers identify individual student (as opposed to school level) performance levels. The following examples illustrate how teachers adapted instructional strategies to accommodate a range in student performance.

To identify students' reading levels, many schools developed ways to measure a student's reading level and to monitor their progress. Thomas Jefferson tested students

[31] Principal interview, Mercury Senior High, 5-6-99.

on their reading level through the Accelerated Reading program and included the student's reading level on their report card. The principal said this was a way to know if "the public schools are making any difference in the lives of kids."[32] The language arts department at Tubman developed a language assessment that included reading. "We noticed . . . we needed to focus on reading because our kids can read words but they weren't thinking about what they were reading."[33] This assessment, which focused on reading comprehension, was administered in the fall and the spring, and was used to identify areas in need of extra support. Collin Springs began testing ninth and tenth grade students in 1995 because teachers "didn't really have a clear idea of where the skill level was . . . and we wanted to know what their reading levels were."[34] The results from this assessment served as the impetus to modify the Advisory Period and add a reading requirement.

A number of teachers talked about the instructional strategies they used to accommodate differences in student abilities. Robert Wagner, IB and chemistry teacher at Mercury High, noted a number of differences in teaching science to IB students as compared to "regular" students. According to Wagner, IB students, who are very bright and highly motivated, will persist with the material until they understand it. On the other hand, a "regular kid" who doesn't understand something "won't get involved." To involve these students, Wagner used projects, writing assignments that required students to look for information in the textbook, and simulations that helped students connect the material to their lives.

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[32] Principal interview, Thomas Jefferson Senior High, 3-22-99.
[33] Language arts teacher interview, Harriet Tubman Middle, 3-24-99.
[34] Principal interview, Collin Springs Senior High, 3-23-99.

Sally Young, a seventh grade language arts teacher at Anderson, developed project assignments that included what she referred to as "different entry level points." She explained how these entry points were manifested in a list of 15 suggestions for students' culminating assignment: "My highest kid said, 'I don't want to do any of these—I want to write a final chapter to the book.' My lower ability kid looked at the first one, got that far and knew exactly which one they were going to do." She takes her students' ability levels into account when grading, as well, through a grading rubric: "My special needs kids who have a hard time writing a paragraph are graded on the information that they are able to get into that little paragraph, versus my gifted kids who should be able to write a paragraph."[35] Another Anderson teacher described the difference in his approach to students in honors and regular classes simply: "every once in a while I'll have to stop and I'll say, do you guys know what that means? And I'll have to explain it to them."[36]

Teachers used these different instructional strategies toward the same goal—to encourage all students to think and analyze the material presented to them. The difference, however, came in the form of the strategy, not the curriculum, used. As Doug Chou, a history teacher at Los Acros, explained: "In the standard class I might give them a worksheet and have them find the information from the text book. With the honors class I give them the same worksheet but I'll m be add a couple of questions at the end and have them write an essay on it to challenge their critical thinking and their understanding."[37] Kent Olson, a teacher of Remedial English at Mercury High School focused on "small pieces, small reading selections, a lot of feedback, small assignments. .

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[35] Teacher interview, Anderson Fundamental Intermediate, 5-3-99.
[36] Teacher interview, Anderson Fundamental Intermediate, 5-3-99.

. . They are not major, huge assignments. They are small pieces and they just keep hammering away. I am trying to teach them . . .that if they will just plug away, they can make progress."[38]

The use of these different strategies for different ability levels ensured that all types of students were capable of success. Wagner gave as much credit for successful participation in a simulation as for an examination. He said this was a way to tell students that what they think was as important as a correct answer on a test. With students who had not been successful before, he began with relatively easy assignments to build their confidence. To a similar end, Olson explained: "I use a number of approaches to basically encourage them to give it their best effort. . . . These kids . . . need to have some sense of success."[39]

Supporting programs. Finally, many of the schools had other, general support programs that were likely to benefit reading. Mercury and Montevideo high schools offered study skills programs that provided a combination of study skills and organizational skills for students and teachers. Commenting on the study skills program at Mercury, the English chair said, "we've found it's really made a difference, especially with a lot of the grade level kids and below grade level kids. . . ."[40]

Some schools, particularly middle schools, provided students with opportunities to receive additional instruction on the curriculum that they receive in their regular classes. Sometimes these were after school tutoring programs, such as the homework center at Los Arcos where students could go for assistance with math and language arts

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[37] Teacher interview, Anderson Fundamental Intermediate, 5-3-99.
[38] Teacher interview, Mercury Senior High, 5-6-99.
[39] Teacher interview, Mercury Senior High, 5-6-99.
[40] Teacher interview, Mercury Senior High, 5-6-99.

homework. Tubman middle school also offered after school "clubs" that provided academic support to students needing assistance. One club for sixth grade and English Language Development students allocated school improvement money to cover the cost of materials and teacher salaries. A second homework club provided tutoring twice a week to any student and was staffed by teacher volunteers. At other times, assistance was offered during the day, as was the case at Anderson Fundamental. The school used its forty-five minute lunch period to offer academic support programs. For example, the school held a Tutor Core, a Math Basic Skills tutoring session, and a study hall that provided a quiet place for students to have lunch and work on their homework. In addition, a language arts teacher held a lunchtime study skills class for twelve to fourteen students identified by the faculty as needing extra help. This course met daily for a three-week session, at the end of which another group of students participated.

Conclusions and Implications

Teaching reading and writing at the middle and high school levels traditionally has not been part of the curriculum. In California, the awareness of the need to address literacy at the middle and high school levels has been facilitated by state level policies and the state reading initiative aimed at improving literacy. These provided the starting point for the initiation and implementation of programs by districts and schools. In addition, awareness by school personnel that their students were frequently deficient in reading skills has meant that districts and schools are beginning to tackle these issues.

The findings presented in this study are preliminary and limited by the small sample size. They do suggest, however, that middle and high schools have adopted a limited number of strategies aimed at improving the literacy skills of their students.

Because of organizational and resource constraints—including limited funding, scheduling limitations, curriculum requirements, few teachers with reading expertise, and a lack of appropriate materials—the most commonly adopted practices included reading or writing across the curriculum and sustained silent reading. Nonetheless, we found that other practices at these schools were as important as particular reading strategies in contributing to their students' reading development and academic achievement. These schools were able to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers and attract a diverse student population. This helped the schools minimize the effects of concentrated poverty; residential segregation, and the uneven professional preparation of teachers. Most important was how these schools distributed these resources within the school. They made sure students of all ability levels received high quality instruction that accommodated differences in students' abilities, and they provided support programs that gave students opportunities for additional instruction.

This study suggests a number of issues for school and district administrators to consider, especially for schools with high concentrations of low income, low achieving students. The schools in this study were racially, economically, and academically diverse. So often policy makers seem to assume that the effects of racial and economic segregation can be overcome with the right set of educational reforms. The findings from this study would suggest that schools that can attract a more diverse student population are more likely to perform well, attract and retain better teachers, and offer a more diversified curriculum. Although administrators cannot change the SES characteristics of its students, they can adjust school attendance boundaries, as one district did, or add programs to attract more able students, as many of these schools did. Increasing the

number of skilled and motivated teachers poses a difficult challenge and is not easily amenable to short-term solutions. The schools and districts we visited provided good working environments, and in some cases, higher salaries, which helped them retain teachers longer. Most importantly, they all paid attention to recruitment and hiring, practices that helped them identify and hire strong candidates.

To support reading and writing in middle and high schools, two issues need to be considered. First, attention needs to be devoted to the organization of instruction as it takes place in middle and high school classrooms. This includes information about students' current reading levels, goals to identify what improvements realistically can be expected, and ways to monitor progress. Second, an organizational structure is needed that will support and sustain reading instruction, including the availability of adequate instructional time, teachers that are properly trained, and the availability of appropriate resources.

At the policy level, there needs to be greater coordination of policies that support the improvement of the curriculum and instructional practices. The California legislature and state board has adopted a number of initiatives in recent years aimed at the goal of improving literacy. They have allocated money for professional development in reading, support for the purchase of instructional materials, and the development of reading programs. However, these initiatives are politically and ideologically driven, with an almost exclusive focus on basic skills and phonics instruction. Additionally, state policies have not accounted for the large number of students who are learning English as a second language, class size reduction policies exacerbate teacher shortages, and the

reading initiatives ignore scheduling constraints. To adequately address the literacy needs of California students, these issues will have to be addressed.

This study has identified several influences on the adoption of reading strategies as well as other factors likely to influence reading improvement. Those thinking about the improvement of reading in middle and high schools should consider the differential effects particular strategies are likely to have on student achievement. In other words, some strategies may be more important for some students than others, the quality of the overall instructional program may provide greater benefits than a particular reading program, and the effectiveness of particular strategies, programs, and policies may be limited unless organizational and institutional factors are considered as well.

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TABLE 1

Selected schools, outlier status, percent low income, and percent Limited English Proficient (LEP), 1998.

School	Outlier Status* SD	Percent Low Income	Percent LEP
Montevideo High	1.44	17.9%	5%
Jefferson High	0.88	75.2%	37%
Mercury High	0.69	26.7%	18%
Collin Springs High	0.68	61.1%	22%
Tubman Middle	1.07	29.6%	24%
Los Arcos Middle	1.06	48.2%	11%
Webster Jr. High	0.94	65.5%	21%
Anderson Fund.	0.77	43.5%	20%

Source: American Institutes for Research.

* "Distance" of the school from its predicted score based on STAR reading scores.

TABLE 2

Student socioeconomic and demographic characteristics for selected schools in California (1997 – 1998)

	STUDENTS				
SCHOOL	**# Enrolled.**	**% of F&R lunch**	**% of AFDC**	**% of LEP**	**% of dropout**
Harriet Tubman Middle School	921	26.9%	13.5%	24.1%	N/A
Webster Junior High School	646	65.5%	20.9%	20.6%	N/A
Los Arcos Middle School	719	48.2%	13.4%	10.6%	N/A
Anderson Fundamental	1171	43.5%	3.7%	20.3%	N/A
Collin Springs High School	1523	61.1%	17.5%	22.1%	1.8%
Mercury High School	2660	26.7%	40.5%	17.7%	4.8%
Montevideo High School	1567	17.9%	4.4%	5.2%	0.6%
Thomas Jefferson High School	1826	75.2%	17.5%	37.5%	5.8%

Source: California Public Schools Profiles, http://www.ed-data.k12.ca.us/dev/School.asp

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TABLE 3
Students by ethnic group for selected schools in California, 1997 – 1998

	STUDENTS						
SCHOOL	**% of White**	**% of AFAM**	**% of Hispanic**	**% of Filipino**	**% of Pacific Islander**	**% of Asian**	**% of American Indian**
Harriet Tubman Middle School	20.5%	6.0%	30.4%	10.4%	2.1%	30.4%	0.2%
Webster Junior High School	29.6%	10.1%	57.4%	0.8%	0.3%	0.3%	1.5%
Los Arcos Middle School	30.7%	22.0%	16.4%	8.2%	3.8%	17.7%	1.3%
Anderson Fundamental	12.9%	4.1%	72.1%	0.5%	0	10.3%	0.1%
Collin Springs High School	30.7%	10.9%	43.9%	1.2%	0.7%	11.9%	0.7%
Mercury High School	34.9%	5.8%	36.3%	1.2%	0.6%	20.6%	0.6%
Montevideo High School	54.7%	12.1%	14.9%	6.2%	3.1%	8.4%	0.7%
Thomas Jefferson High School	21.2%	13.3%	60.2%	0.7%	1.1%	3.2%	0.3%

Source: California Public Schools Profiles, http://www.ed-data.k12.ca.us/dev/School.asp

TABLE 4

Reading programs, reading specialists, and students identified with reading problems reported by principals for eight selected middle and high schools in California, survey results, 1999.

School	Reading Program	Reading Specialist	ID with reading problems	
			No.	%
Collin Springs HS	Accelerated Reading Program with 500 students participating	No	300/1560	25.75%
Mercury HS	None	Yes with CA Reading/LA Specialist credential	636/2643	24.06%
Montevideo HS	None	No	15/1600	0.93%
Thomas Jefferson HS	Accelerated Reading Program with 330 students participating	Yes with CA Reading/LA Specialist credential	800/1729	46.27%
Harriet Tubman MS	Did not return survey			
Webster Jr. High	None	No	427/687	62.15%
Los Arcos MS	None	Yes with CA Reading/LA Specialist credential	214/741	28.88%
Anderson Fund.	None	No	360/1165	30.90%

Source: Data from the American Institutes for Research, *Survey of Reading Standards, Assessment, and Programs at Middle and High Schools.* Survey administrated during the 1998-99 school year.

TABLE 5:
Organizational characteristics of schools and reading initiatives, California, 1999.

Reading Initiative	**High School**	**Middle School/Jr. High**
Reading/Writing Across the Curriculum	Mercury Thomas Jefferson	Anderson Tubman Webster Jr. High
Sustained Silent Reading	Thomas Jefferson Collin Springs Montevideo	
Remedial Reading Class	Mercury Thomas Jefferson Collin Springs	
Accelerated Reader Program	Thomas Jefferson	
Tutoring		Webster Jr. High
LA/English	Montevideo	Anderson Tubman Los Acros
Professional Development	Mercury Collins Springs	Tubman Webster Jr. High

TABLE 6:
Middle School Curriculum Orientation and Approach to Reading Improvement, Four California Middle Schools

	Curriculum Orientation		
Reading Approach	**Student Centered**	**Subject Matter**	**Mixed**
Part of Language Arts Curriculum	Anderson Los Arcos		Harriet Tubman
Reading Across the Curriculum	Anderson	Webster	Harriet Tubman
Reading Tutoring		Webster	

TABLE 5

Number of teachers, percent with teacher credentials, and teacher experience at the state, county, district, and school level, 1998-1999.

State County / District / School	Total # of teachers	% 1st yr. teachers	% Full Credentials	Avg. # of yrs. teaching	Avg. # of yrs. in district
State of California	282,635	8.8	87.5	12.9	10.4
County	6,995	6.7	88.0	12.4	9.9
District	1,451	5.2	82.6	12.5	10.5
WEBSTER	26	3.8	96.2	20.1	17.4
County	12,543	9.9	87.8	14.1	11.5
District	569	9.1	92.4	12.7	10.3
TUBMAN	40	2.5	100	16	13.4
County	4,394	5.9	95.9	13.8	11
District	526	2.9	98.9	16.3	13.2
MERCURY	103	3.9	100	16.4	14.1
County	3,480	8.3	87.3	14.0	10.4
District	690	5.7	93.0	17.5	13.6
LOS ARCOS	34	8.8	91.2	16.6	11.6
County	22,872	10.4	95.1	12.5	10.8
District	7,139	18.0	93.4	11.2	11.1
JEFFERSON HS	89	18.0	95.5	10.1	10.1
County	22,872	10.4	95.1	12.5	10.8
District	7,139	18.0	93.4	11.2	11.1
C. SPRINGS	71	12.6	95.8	14.7	14.5
County	21,668	8.0	92.8	13.9	11.3
District	2,481	6.0	82.0	14.0	10.3
ANDERSON	43	7.0	86.0	15.4	11.9
County	3,496	8.3	87.4	14.0	10.0
District	690	5.7	93.0	17.5	13.6
MONTEVIDEO	75	2.7	93.3	21.0	16.2

Sources: http://star.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/NumTchsch.asp and http://star.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/TchExp1.asp

TABLE 8:
Special programs offered by selected schools and their enrollment procedures, 1998-99 school year.

SCHOOL	SPECIAL PROGRAM	ENROLLMENT PROCEDURE
Harriet Tubman Middle School	• Neighborhood School	70% are from the neighborhood, while 30% are bused from poor neighborhoods.
Webster Junior High School	• Project Youth Employment Start • CISCO Academy • Technology Broadcasting • Music Program	Students who live within the school's boundaries are guaranteed admission, after that has been satisfied, students from other neighborhoods can enter on first come first served basis.
Los Arcos Middle School	• Magnet for Special Ed students	
Anderson Fundamental Intermediate School	• Fundamental	Admission is on first come, first served basis. Since the school is oversubscribed, parents camp out and stand in line to gain admission. Students and parents sign a contract to abide by school policies.
Collin Springs High School	• Marketing, Management, Graphics and Design Magnet	Open enrollment. Students from the entire district apply for the entrance to the magnet program. To maintain eligibility, students enrolled in the Magnet Program are required to take at least one magnet class each semester.
Mercury High School	• International Baccalaureate (IB)	Students from the entire district apply for entrance to the IB program. Applicants to the IB program must meet certain qualifications.
Montevideo High School	• Montevideo Academy of Oceanography Science (MAOS) • The Academy of Travel and Tourism • Arts Career Academy	Students from entire district apply for entrance to the Academies.
Thomas Jefferson High School	• International Baccalaureate (IB) • Writing Academy • Spanish & French Immersion Continuity	Students from the entire district apply for entrance to the IB program and magnet programs. Applicants to the IB program must meet certain qualifications.

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